

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A molding device for blow-molding or stretch-blow-molding containers from heated thermoplastic preforms, said device comprising at least one mold [(1)] comprising at least two half-molds [(1a, 1b)] that can be moved with respect to each other between an open position in which they are parted from one another and a closed position in which they are firmly pressed against one another via collaborating respective bearing faces [(2a, 2b)] defining a parting line [(3)], locking means [(14)] being provided to lock the two half-molds [(1a, 1b)] in the closed position, wherein:

~~characterized in that:~~

- the locking means [(14)] comprise two lock elements [(15, 16)] mounted respectively on the two half-molds [(1a, 1b)] along the edges of the respective bearing faces and extending substantially over the entire height of said half-molds,

- each lock element [(15, 16)] comprises a multiplicity of hook-shaped projecting fingers [(17, 18)] distributed over the entire height of the lock element and which, on one lock element [(15)] face away from the bearing face of the corresponding half-mold and, on the other lock element [(16)] face toward the bearing face of the corresponding half-mold, said fingers [(17, 18)] of each lock element being substantially parallel and separated from one

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another by spacings [(19, 20)] the individual heights of which are slightly greater than the individual heights of the fingers,

- one of the lock elements [(15)] being mounted fixedly on the corresponding half-mold [(1a)] and the other lock element [(16)] being mounted, on the other half-mold [(1b)], such that it can move so that it can be slid parallel to the axis of the mold,

- and actuating means [(23)] functionally associated with said moving lock element [(16)] in order to move the latter between two positions, namely:

a first position or unlocked position in which the fingers [(18)] of the moving lock element [(16)] are positioned respectively level with the spacings [(19)] between the fingers [(17)] of the fixed lock element [(15)], in which position the two half-molds are not locked together, and

a second position or locked position in which, with the two half-molds [(1a, 1b)] pressed firmly together in the closed position, the moving lock element [(16)] is moved parallel to the axis of the mold so that its fingers [(18)] engage respectively with the fingers [(17)] of the fixed lock element [(15)], in which position the two half-molds are locked together in their closed position.

2. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the number of fingers [(17, 18)] is as high as possible in relation to the mechanical strength of said fingers, whereby the height of the spacings [(19, 20)] between the fingers [(17,

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18)) and therefore the travel of the moving lock element between its locked and unlocked positions are as low as possible.

3. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the moving lock element $[(16)]$ is supported, on the corresponding half-mold $[(1b)]$, by a guide member $[(21)]$ substantially parallel to the axis of the mold, on which member said lock element $[(16)]$ is slidably mounted.

4. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the guide member is a rod $[(21)]$ secured to the half-mold, on which rod the moving lock element is slidably mounted, but prevented from rotating.

5. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~, ~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the actuating means $[(23)]$ for actuating the moving lock element $[(16)]$ comprise:

- a return spring $[(24)]$ able to return said lock element $[(16)]$ to its aforesaid first position, and

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- a positive actuating member ~~[[25]]~~ secured to said moving lock element ~~[[16]]~~ and able to act positively thereon in order to move it, against the return force of the spring ~~[[24]]~~, toward its second position.

6. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the positive actuating member ~~[[25]]~~ is able to be controlled, when the two half-molds ~~[[1a, 1b]]~~ are in the closed position, by the other half-mold ~~[[1a]]~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the fixed lock element ~~[[15]]~~ forms an integral part of the half-mold ~~[[1a]]~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~, ~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the fixed lock element ~~[[15]]~~ is produced in the form of a part ~~[[27, 17]]~~ secured fixedly to the corresponding half-mold ~~[[1a]]~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~, ~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the guide member ~~[[21]]~~ that guides the moving lock element ~~[[16]]~~ is supported directly by the corresponding half-mold ~~[[1b]]~~.

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10. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 8,~~
~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the guide member [(21)] that guides the moving lock
element [(16)] is fixed to an intermediate plate [(29)], itself fixed to the half-mold [(1b)].

11. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to~~
~~10, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the mold [(1)] is of the hinged type with the two half-
molds [(1a, 1b)] articulated to one another in terms of rotation on a shaft [(8)] substantially
parallel to one side of the parting line [(3)], and ~~in that~~ wherein said locking means (14) are
provided on the opposite side of said shaft [(8)] about which the two half-molds [(1a, 1b)]
rotate relative to one another.

12. (Currently Amended) The molding device as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to~~
~~11~~ claim 1, in which each half-mold [(1a, 1b)] comprises a shell holder [(5a, 5b)] to which
there is internally fixed a shell [(6a, 6b)] equipped with a molding half-cavity [(4a, 4b)] the
parting line [(3)] being defined by the two shells pressed together when the mold is in the
closed position, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the locking means [(14)] are supported by the
two shell-holders [(5a, 5b)].